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ABSTRACT

The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) has come into the American higher educational scene as a relevant response to public needs. The need for some kind of measurement for noncredit continuing education was established at a nationwide conference. The CEU--10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction--can be used in many ways in many areas, from measurement to participation recognition and from adult liberal education to professional continuing education. Administrative standards need to be established to ensure discriminating use of the CEU. The National Task Force on the CEU detailed such requirements, and the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' adoption of the CEU furthered the establishment of standards. (Some workshop materials and organizational models are included in the paper to facilitate understanding of the CEU's proper application.) Implementation of the CEU while acknowledging its strengths and weaknesses is one response higher education can make to the need for ensuring quality of results and equality of access. (AG)

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT: A NEW KIND OF CREDIT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION CONTINUING EDUCATION

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Introduction

The three major functions of higher education are generally recognized to be teaching, research, and service. Much emphasis has been placed on the first two functions during the past several decades. Much of the criticism surrounding higher education today is emanating from its lack of emphasis on the "public service" function and is directed toward the concepts of "relevance," "flexibility," and "access." The general public is growing increasingly impatient with higher education's slowness to change and its reluctance to respond to the educational needs of the adult population of the United States. Traditional courses and programs have been slightly modified to meet new demands and provide new approaches to public service. Yet, the major efforts of institutions have been in maintaining the traditional concepts of formal education.

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Recent studies have revealed an ever increasing need for non-credit educational courses, programs, and activities in institutions of higher education--adult and continuing education and extension. The Johnstone[1] study of the mid-sixties indicated that more than 25,000,000 individuals within the United States, exclusive of full-time regular students, are engaged in at least one continuing education program annually. The recent reports of the Carnegie Commission predict that non-credit adult and continuing education programs will become a major component of American higher education during the remainder of the seventies and into the eighties. The Non-Traditional Study Commission sponsored by Carnegie and directed by Sam Gould recommends that the higher education institutions develop new programs, modify existing programs, and design new delivery systems for education to accommodate the adult student.

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[1]John Wallace Claire Johnstone and Raymond J. Rivera, Volunteers for Learning, A Study of the Educational Pursuits of American Adults (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965).

Those institutions who recognize this fact and begin now to prepare for the adult student will find themselves in the mainstream of American post-secondary education. These institutions will not be as greatly affected by the declining birth rate and thus declining number of regular full-time students available to the college market. Institutions of higher education can play a significant role in the American social development by providing relevant continuing education programs of quality for the professional agencies, business and industry, government, and the public in general. A new kind of recognition system or a new kind of credit--the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) has come into the American higher educational scene in recent months which is opening the way for a more relevant response to public needs by higher educational institutions.

The Early Beginning ... The National Task Force

In July of 1968, a national planning conference was called in Washington, D.C. This conference was

sponsored jointly by the National University Extension Association, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the U.S. Civil Service Commission, and the U.S. Office of Education. The purpose of this conference was to determine the level of interest in a uniform unit of measurement for non-credit continuing education. Thirty-four national organizations represented at the conference expressed an interest in one aspect or another of identifying, measuring and recognizing individual effort in continuing education.

The interest and sense of urgency for a concerted national movement expressed at this meeting resulted in the creation of a National Task Force to determine the feasibility of a uniform unit of measurement.

The impetus for a uniform unit of measure for continuing education developed as a result of a demonstrated need for an increase in knowledge and the resulting decrease in the utility of prior learning which individuals acquire during their

earlier years of formal education. This demand for retraining activities is reflected in the constant increase in participation in continuing education and also in the number of institutions and organizations offering programs of this kind.

At this same time several organizations and institutions either had initiated or were studying ways of measurement and awards for continuing education students each having little or no relationship to any other system in existence. It appeared that the development of a uniform unit nationally accepted, would hold promise of reducing the confusion and fragmentation by arriving at a single suitable means of recognizing and rewarding individual effort in the pursuit of continuing education.

These needs, and others, have resulted in the establishment of the Continuing Education Unit.

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT IS DEFINED AS FOLLOWS: TEN CONTACT HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN AN ORGANIZED CONTINUING EDUCATION EXPERIENCE UNDER RESPONSIBLE SPONSORSHIP, CAPABLE

DIRECTION AND QUALIFIED INSTRUCTION.

Continuing education, for the purpose of this definition, includes all institutional and organizational learning experiences in organized formats that impart non-credit education. Continuing education may be applied equally under the proposed system regardless of the teaching-learning format, program duration, source of sponsorship, subject matter, level, audience or purpose.

The continuing education unit may be used for the measurement, recording, reporting, accumulation, transfer, and recognition of participation by adults in programs which in the past have not been recorded in any formal or systematic way.

The unit can be applied with equal facility to professional continuing education, vocational retraining, and adult liberal education as well as other programs in adult and continuing education.

The individual adult student should be able to accumulate, update, and transfer his record on continuing education

throughout life in maintaining or increasing proficiency in his career or in making progress toward his personal educational goals. In the absence of such a universally recognized unit, the concept of education as a continuous process is often lost. This lack of any cumulative record has often resulted in many continuing education programs being built upon narrowly defined educational objectives and the establishment of only short-termed goals which were usually institutionally oriented rather than student directed.

Thus, the purpose of the CEU is to provide a mechanism by which most continuing education activities can be recorded. It is not expected, on the other hand, that all of the participation in terms of continuing education units will have utility or transferability.

There would appear to be definite institutional and other sponsor advantages in quantifying and recording the total amount of continuing education activity for which such organizations are responsible.

The key to the success and usefulness of the CEU will be found in its discriminating use. While the CEU itself is basically a quantifying mechanism, the administrative process with which it is implemented can and should provide the quality factors to make the CEU a meaningful measurement. Administrative guidelines for the CEU process have been established. It is stressed that the system of recording units of continuing education participants may be related to the current system of permanent records used in an institution or a separate and parallel system can be designed and maintained.

In the statement of the National Task Force on the Continuing Education Unit the administrative requirements for establishing and maintaining the quality control over the assignment and awarding of the CEU are detailed as follows:

1. A specific high level individual within the continuing education operation of the institution should certify and approve the awarding of a specific number of Continuing Education Units for a program prior to the program offering.

2. The program director for each learning experience should be responsible for certifying that the program was attended and completed by individuals who request Units.

3. The institution is responsible for establishing and maintaining permanent records of Continuing Education Units awarded. The information to be recorded on each individual should include at least the following:

   A. The name of the student

   B. Social Security Number of student

   C. Title of course

   D. Course description and comparative level

   E. Starting and ending dates of activity

   F. Format of program

   G. Number of Continuing Education Units awarded

In addition it is suggested as highly desirable that the permanent records include:

A. Evaluation of each individual's performance

B. The name of the instructor and course director

C. Personal information about the students: address, date of birth, educational background, employment, etc.

D. Any cooperating sponsors, company, associations, agencies, institutions, governments, etc.

E. Course classification, i.e., professional, liberal education, vocational technical, job entry, in-service, etc.

The College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

In 1968, at about the same time that the national task force for the CEU was being created, the Executive Council of the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in recognition of the significant changes taking place in the areas of adult education, continuing education, and extension authorized a study[2] for the purpose of revising its standards for accreditation of these areas within the institutions of higher education in the South.

The study was conducted over a two-year period gathering

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[2]"Accreditation in Adult and Continuing Education Programs," Grover J. Andrews, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Atlanta, Georgia 1973.

data from 560 colleges through a formal instrumentation process on the academic year 1969-70. Informal information gathering took place through numerous meetings with institutional representatives--presidents, deans, faculty members, and deans and directors of continuing education and students. A new standard--Standard Nine--was developed as a result of the study and was adopted by vote of the College Delegate Assembly in December 1971. One of the most significant provisions of the new standard is the use of the Continuing Education Unit--to give recognition to the adult and continuing education student; and to provide an accurate account of total institutional effort by measuring the non-credit offerings of an institution in a form equal to the credit hour. The combining of these two units of measure will more clearly and accurately indicate the total educational effort of an institution.

The results of the Standard Nine and the CEU after two years of use is very dramatic. The qualitative aspects of adult and continuing education within the institutions have

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been significantly improved. The opportunities for further improvements in these areas under the new standard are even greater.

Several regional and statewide workshops have been conducted on the implementation of the new Standard Nine and the CEU. The key issues which have evolved from these meetings appear to relate to institutional organizational structure and program development. The following materials have been developed to facilitate understanding as to the implications of Standard Nine in these areas:

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE NEEDED TO CONFORM TO STANDARD NINE REQUIREMENTS

I. Highlights of Standard IX: Administration and Organization

1. Each member institution involved in special activities will provide appropriate organizational structure and administrative processes according to the magnitude of its program.

2. Institutional organization should recognize and provide a separate identity (a clearly identifiable and defined administrative unit) for special activities under the direction of a designated administrative officer (e.g. vice chancellor, vice president, dean, director, or coordinator.)

3. All policies and regulations affecting special activities should be formulated by the administrative officer in conjunction with and as a part of campus-wide administrative and academic advisory groups.

4. The adminstrative unit for special activities shall be responsible for coordination of all special activities within the institution, both on and off campus.

5. Procedures within the institution for the establishment of new programs, interinstitutional agreements and arrangements, and resources allocation should recognize special activities as an integral part of the total institution.

6. The continuing education unit should be used as the basic instrument of measurement for an individual's participation in and an institution's offering of non-credit classes, courses, and programs.

7. The CEU records will serve as a part of the full-time equivalent student account for the institution.

II. Institutional Goal

To expand the stated purposes of the institution--teaching, research, service--to better serve the educational needs of the community and region served by the institution.

III. "Building Blocks" of a Successful Public Service and Continuing Education Program

1. Institutional Commitment

2. Appropriate Institutional Organization for Public Service and Continuing Education. (A clearly identifiable and defined administrative unit with appropriate institutional policies.)

3. Support of Administration Faculty and Service Units

   A. Administration--Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, etc.

B. Faculty--Each academic college, school, division, department

C. Service Units--Business registrar (Admissions records), security, health, public information, food, development, alumni, maintenance, physical plant, space media, student affairs, printing, mailing, etc.

4. Service to Community

To attain goals, objectives, and purposes of institution through programs serving all people.

IV. What constitutes a successful Public Service and Continuing Education Program?

1. Content Development and Coordination

Utilize the academic faculty having content expertise to assure quality control.

2. Logistical Development and Coordination

Assistance to faculty member by providing the logistical coordination to space, food, fee collection, printing, mailing, media, security, marketing, etc.

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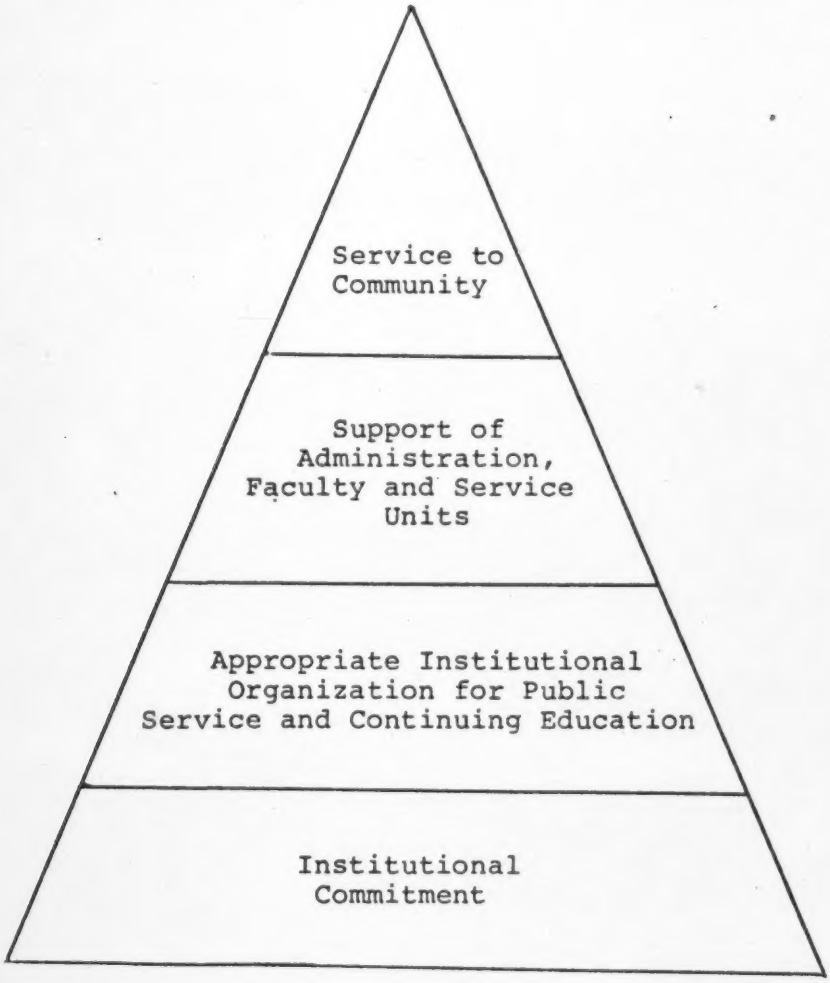
Service to Community
Support of Administration, Faculty and Service Units
Appropriate Institutional Organization for Public Service and Continuing Education
Institutional Commitment

"Building Blocks" of a Successful Public Service and Continuing Education Institutional Program

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What makes a successful Continuing Education Program?

TWO MAJOR PARTS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM		
A. Content Coordination & Development	B. Logistics Coordination & Development	= Successful Accomplishment of Program Objectives
Professional Work		

Program Development Model

Need

Identification of target group

Authorization/legitimization

Goal/objectives setting

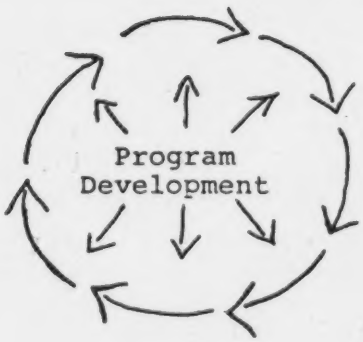
Content/curriculum development

Administrative processes

Implementation

Evaluation/assessment

Record keeping



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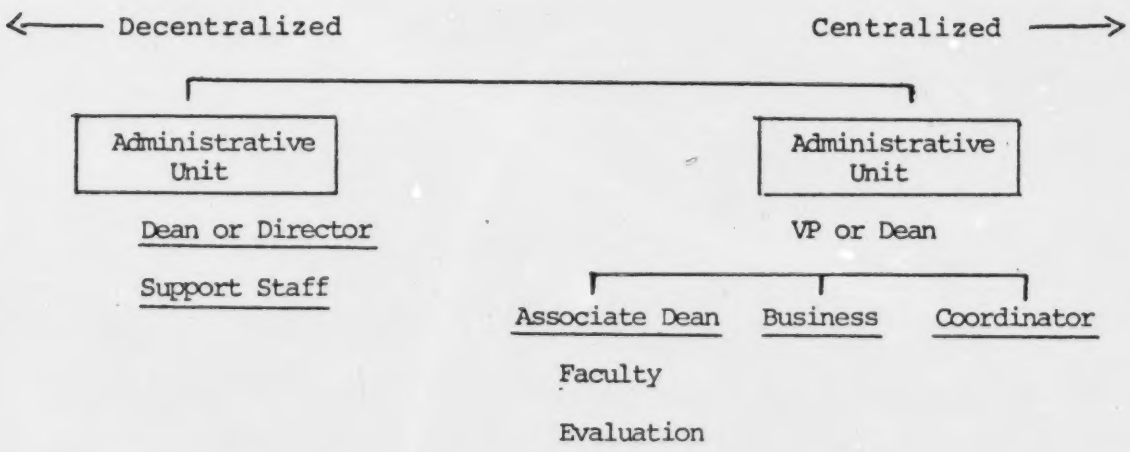
Organizational Models

Several organizational models are presented which are successfully operating within SACS institutions. Perhaps they should be viewed on a continuum from the very simple decentralized model to the highly complex centralized. The important fact originating in Standard Nine is that each institution develop an organizational model appropriate to the needs and general organizational structure of the institution.



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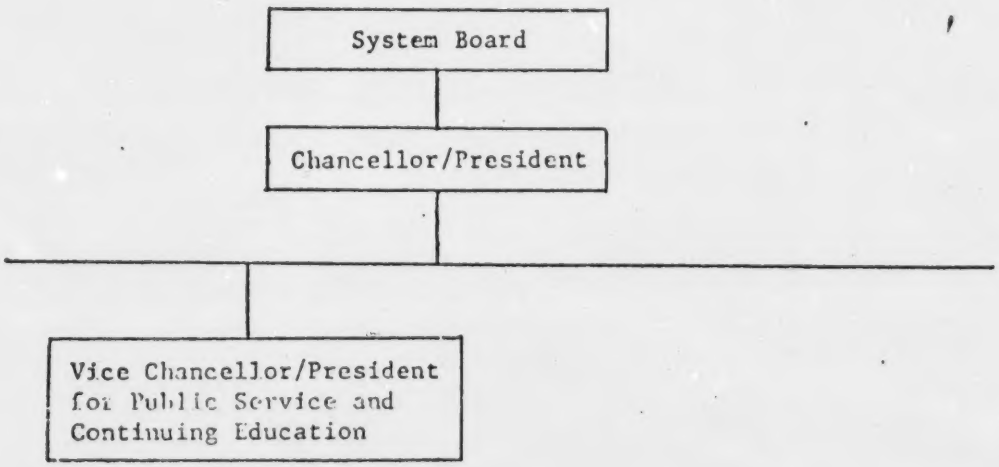
Higher Education System Organization Model



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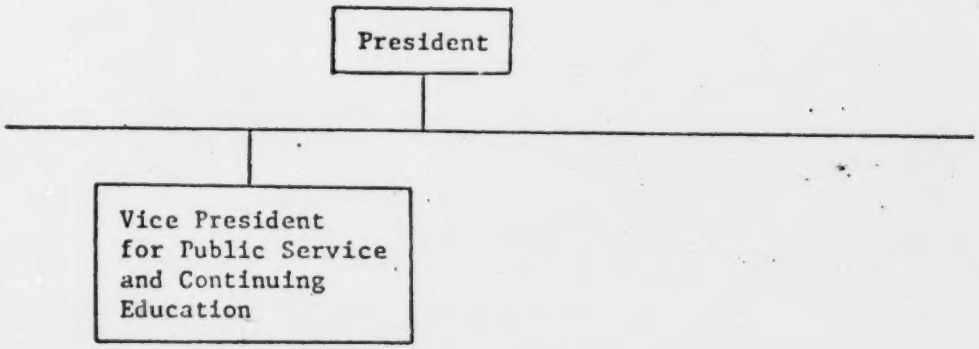
University/Senior College

Organization Model



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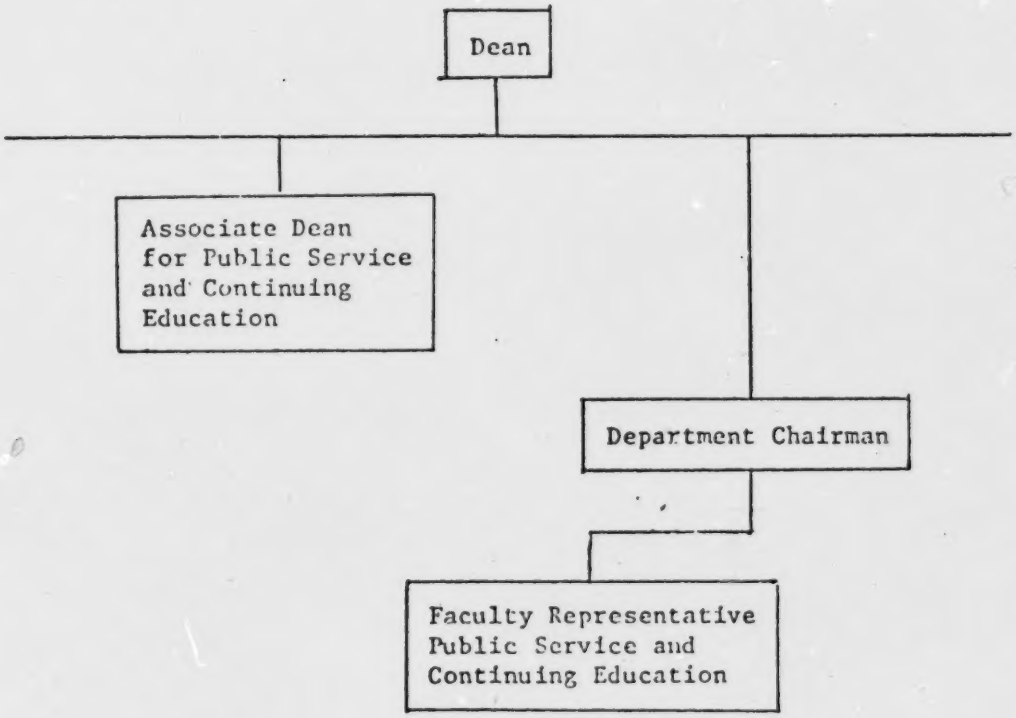
School/College Organization Model


Dean
Associate Dean for Public Service and Continuing Education
Department Chairman
Faculty Representative Public Service and Continuing Education

Community College

Organization Model

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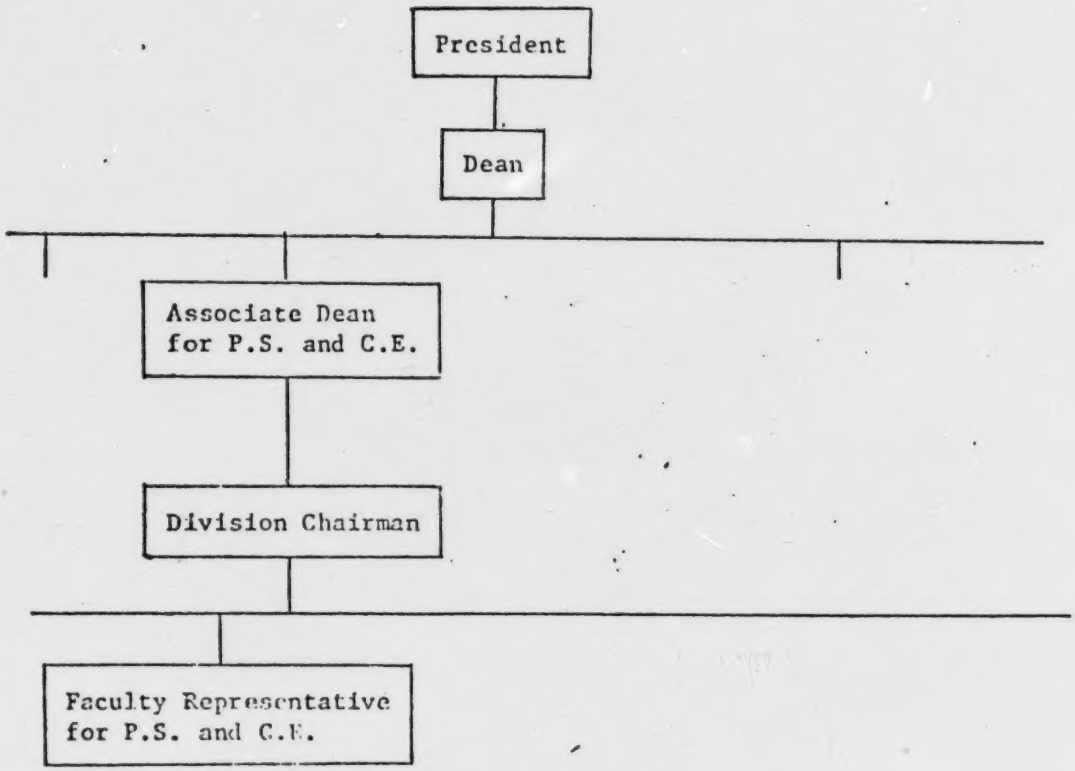

UNIVERSITY P.S. & C.E. ORGANIZATION MODEL

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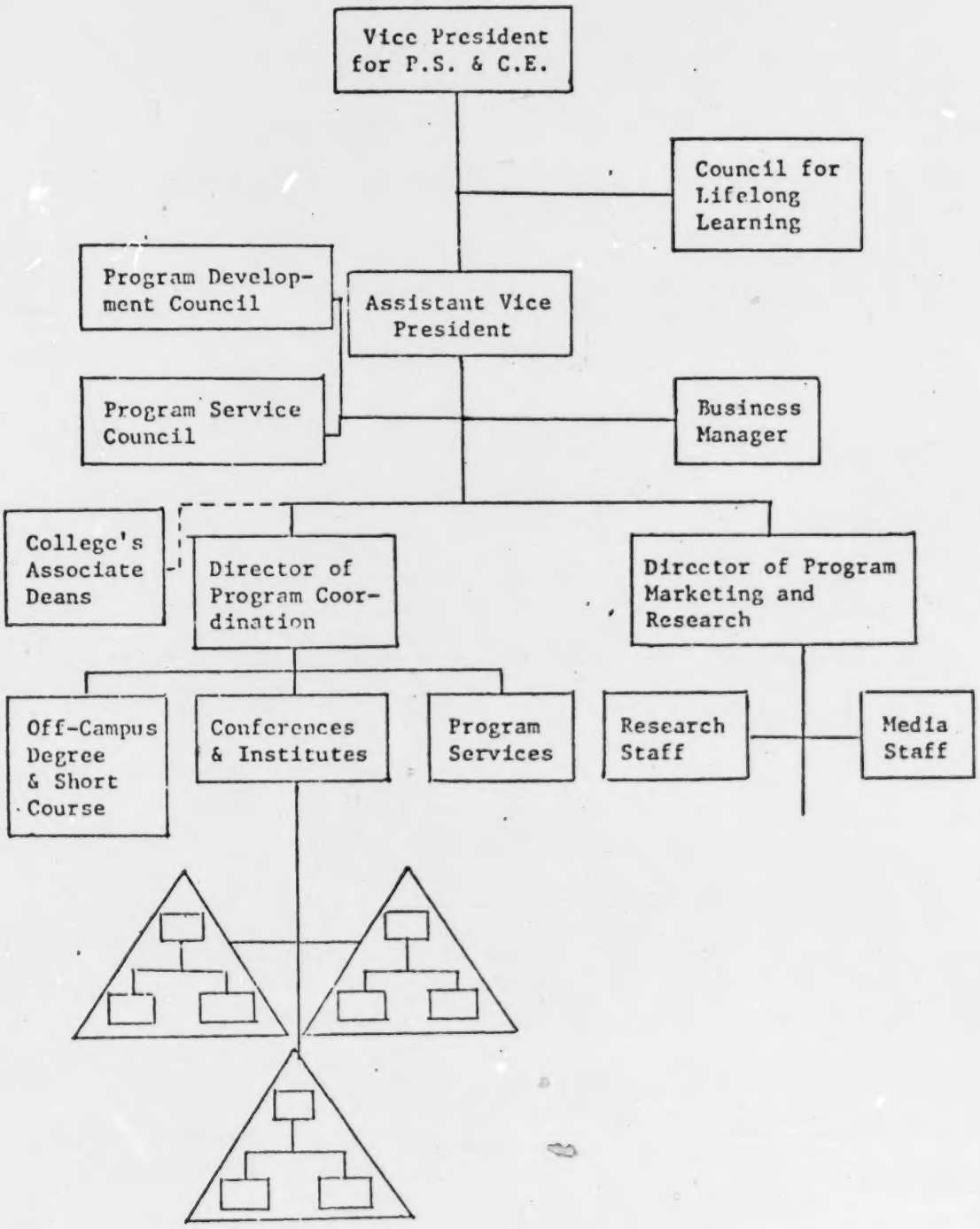

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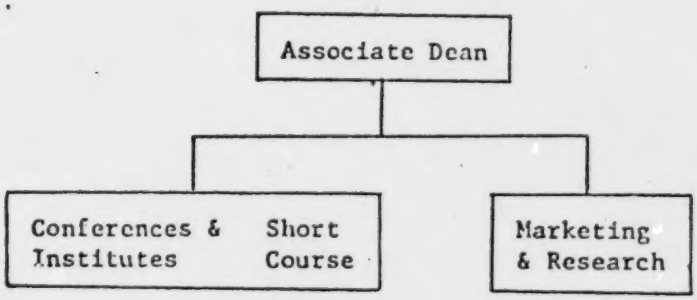
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Coordinated statewide plans for the use of the CEU have been developed in Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. Others are in stages of development in Kentucky, Mississippi, and Texas. Hundreds of individual institutions are now in some stage of implementation of use of the CEU.

An ad hoc committee of institutional representatives worked for over a year to develop and field test specific guidelines for the use of the CEU within an institution of higher education. The criteria developed by this group and now in use within the Southern region for awarding individual continuing education units are as follows:

1. The non-credit activity is planned in response to an assessment of educational need for a specific target population.
2. There is a statement of objectives and rationale.
3. Content is selected and is organized in a sequential manner.
4. There is evidence of pre-planning which should include opportunity for input by a representative of the target group to be served, the faculty area having content expertise, and continuing education personnel.
5. The activity is of an instructional nature and is sponsored or approved by an academic

or administrative unit of the institution best qualified to affect the quality of the program content and to approve the resource personnel utilized.

6. There is a provision for registration for individual participants and to provide data for institutional reporting.

7. Appropriate evaluation procedures are utilized and criteria are established for awarding CEU's to individual students prior to the beginning of the activity. This may include the evaluation of student performance, instructional procedures, and course effectiveness.

The University System of Georgia was the first state to develop a coordinated plan for use of the CEU by all thirty institutions within the system--this includes junior colleges, senior colleges, universities, and a medical college. The Georgia plan has been in successful operation for 18 months now and last year for the first time has received direct funding from the Legislature for public service based on the CEU.

The State of Virginia which was the second state to develop a coordinated plan took another approach. Under the leadership of the State Council for Higher Education a

statewide consortium for continuing education was established by Legislative act. The legislation created six regional consortia and opened participation on a voluntary basis to the private colleges of the state. The CEU is a part of the state plan. A funding formula has been developed and is now waiting approval of the state legislature. North Carolina and Florida now have operational statewide CEU plans for their respective community college systems. One SACS institution has developed a faculty CEU concept for giving recognition to faculty participation and workload in continuing education. Hopkinsville Community College, Kentucky, has developed the concept of a faculty continuing education unit to complement individual and institutional CEU used elsewhere in the southern region. The faculty CEU definition is as simple as individual and institutional CEU: 1 faculty CEU equals 10 contact hours of teaching. A faculty member teaching a short course of 20 hours would be credited with 2 faculty CEU. The awarding of faculty CEU is independent of the

of the number of students taught. Hopkinsville equates 1 faculty CEU with 1 semester hour of teaching "because of the fact that practically all continuing education instruction requires special preparation and is oft times not repeated." For institutional reporting purposes the school weighs CEU as follows: 1 individual CEU = 1 institutional CEU = 2 faculty CEU. As is evidenced of these examples, much CEU activity is currently going on in the Southern region. Outside of the South state plans have been developed in Iowa, Delaware, and New Jersey, and just last month (June 1974) the University of Wisconsin has shifted its Continuing Education Hour (CEH) to the CEU.

The National Scene

Nationally, two very significant actions have taken place in recent months. First, the national task force for the CEU has moved to develop more definitive and controlled use of the CEU by non-higher educational users by developing more elaborate guidleines. These should be in print and

and available by August, 1974. Second, and most important to the higher education - post-secondary field the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (FRACHE) has developed a working paper on the use of the CEU. This paper is currently being circulated by each of the regional commissions for reaction and information--with the ultimate goal of developing a FRACHE operational statement on adult and continuing education activities.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The Continuing Education Unit has some obvious strengths, such as

--the benefits it can offer to the adult student in providing the mechanism for accurately recording and accumulating non-credit educational activities;

--the qualitative effect it can have upon the developmental process for flexible non-credit programs within an institution;

--the institutional benefits for measuring total institutional educational effort resulting in institutional recognition, program funding, and personnel credit for effort expended;

--and the fact that it can be the means of providing for a national unification of adult, continuing, and extension education courses, programs, and activities through the recognition, acceptance, and use of the unit.

--and the CEU can become the primary unit for professional organizational use in certification and re-licensing once an individual has achieved the basic credit-hour educational requirements of the profession.

The CEU is not without some areas of weakness. The major limitations of the unit appear to be as follows:

--in its use merely as a quantifying unit for records and institution accounting;

--in an inconsistent use of the CEU by all institutional and organizational users both in the course or program construction aspects and the record keeping requirements;

--in a narrow interpretation of the "contact hour" component of the definition.

For a successful use of the CEU the qualitative as well as quantitative elements must be equally recognized and developed. The guidelines for the unit must be clearly

understood and consistently followed by all users--educational institutions, business and industry, and the professional societies. It must be recognized that the CEU is a flexible unit which can be applied to many types of programs in various modes of delivery including independent study and non-traditional forms.

The challenge of the CEU is the opportunity it provides for the user and the opportunity it provides for the institution to be responsive in a new and relevant way to the needs of the user.

The future of the CEU as a new kind of credit in higher education is very bright. Dr. John A. Rhodes, Vice President of Memphis State University, has conducted an indepth study on the future of the CEU, utilizing the delphi technique. Dr. Rhodes' study made the final conclusions:

"Upon an analysis of the data collected the following conclusions were made concerning the utilization of the C.E.U. by 1980:

1. That a majority of accredited colleges and universities will be awarding C.E.U.'s and maintaining permanent records for program participants who have earned units.

2. That the quality of continuing education programs will improve because of the criteria set by regional accrediting agencies that must be met before C.E.U.'s are awarded.

3. That C.E.U. records will be maintained by the registrars of institutions.

4. That the C.E.U. will be used to measure faculty work load and participation in continuing education.

5. That faculty members will assume more responsibility for attendance records and evaluation procedures for students in CEU programs.

6. That CEU activities will have a greater share of public fund support for higher education and that this increased funding will increase the competitive struggle for funds within institutions of higher education.

7. That state appropriated budgets for continuing education will be based on the full-time equivalent student enrollment in continuing education programs.

8. That financial support for continuing education from business and professional societies will increase because of the CEU.

9. That the CEU will become the basis for updating and re-licensing members of the major professional organizations.

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10. That because of the CEU institutions of higher education will be able to serve the continuing education needs of industry and government better and, therefore, the number of contracts for non-credit education will increase."[3]

Based upon my knowledge of and experience with the CEU it is my belief that the unit, properly administered and implemented is one way higher education can respond to the charge of the Carnegie Commission report "Quality and Equality" (1970, p. 1)

> What the American nation needs and expects from higher education in the critical years just ahead can be summed up in two phrases: quality of results and equality of access. Our colleges and universities must maintain and strengthen academic quality...at the same time, the nation's campuses must act energetically and even aggressively to open new channels to equality of educational opportunity.

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[3]John A. Rhodes, Jr., The Utilization of the Continuing Education Unit in Conferences, Institutes, Short Courses, Workshops, Seminars, and Special Training Programs Within the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, (Atlanta: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1974).

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